DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 176 SO 014 105

AUTHOR	Conrad, Daniel E.
TITLE	Learning from the Field Experience: A Guide for Student Reflection in Youth Participation Programs.
INSTITUTION	National Commission on Resources for Youth, Inc., New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Joyce Foundation, Chicago, IL.
PUB DATE	May 82
NOTE	64p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Commission on Resources for Youth, Inc., 36 W. 44th Street, New York, NY 10036 ($5.00).
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Involvement; Guidelines; Learning Activities; Program Improvement; *School Community Programs; Secondary Education; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Student Evaluation; *Student Participation; Student Projects; *Youth
IDENTIFIERS	*Reflective Thinking

ABSTRACT

The booklet suggests approaches and methods to help the teacher or program leader maximize students' learning from their community involvement. The purpose is to provide practical suggestions for encouraging young people to reflect on their participation in the community programs. The suggestions will help secondary students think about their experiences, write about them, share them with others, and learn from them. Four basic assumptions underlie the ideas and activities presented: youth participation programs can and should do more than simply release students from school in order to work in the community; growth and learning are not an automatic consequence of even the most engaging community experience; most people do not commonly reflect on the meaning of experience; and most teachers are looking for ways to help students learn from their experiences. The first two chapters of the booklet define what a program's reflective component should contain and suggest alternative ways of incorporating them into existing or new programs. The remaining chapters provide sample activities that can be directly applied or easily adapted to most programs. Activities include having students write a daily journal, compile weekly reports, make observation reports, and develop a product. Activities which allow students to evaluate themselves are also provided. (RM)

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LEARNING FROM THE FIELD EXPERIENCE:

A GUIDE FOR STUDENT REFLECTION IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

SP 014 105

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON RESOURCES FOR YOUTH, INC., is an independent, non-profit organization founded to expand opportunities for young people to assume active, responsible roles in their communities--what NCRY calls Youth Participation. In programs of Youth Participation youth gain direct experience in the real world, making decisions, working in partnership with their peers and with adults, and meeting genuine community needs. A comprehensive Youth Participation program also provides for youth to reflect critically on their experience, and to study related subject matter. NCRY seeks out, promotes and assists Youth Participation programs that recognize the capabilities and developmental needs of young people.

This publication was written by Daniel E. Conrad, Ph.D.

Peter Kleinbard
Executive Director

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May, 1982

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this Handbook emerged in the Spring of 1980, when NCRY staff and associates met at the University of Chicago to develop materials and training strategies for use in support of youth employment programs. One outcome of that meeting was a plan for a handbook, *Thinking About the Work Experience: A Manual for Learning and Reflection in Youth Employment Programs*. The plan was developed by NCRY Associates Daniel Conrad, Catherine Howard and James Schott and by Peter Kleinbard. Dan Conrad, from the Center for Youth Development and Research at the University of Minnesota, wrote the handbook. It was edited by NCRY Associate Diane Harrington and is available from the Commission.

But all who worked on the original project felt frustrated that constraints of time and money prevented the preparation of another booklet that would reach a wider audience, especially in schools. Finally, funds became available through a grant from the Joyce Foundation of Chicago. Dan Conrad volunteered his time to help rework the original. Cathy Howard did much of the new writing and, again, Diane Harrington edited it. Bruce Dollar, NCRY's Associate Director, worked on both versions and Ellen Lippmann, NCRY's Clearinghouse Coordinator, supervised production of this version. The result is the current handbook.

A good reflective seminar has many of the qualities of a good class discussion. Students bring ideas and questions that they have thought about beforehand and they address each other as well as the teacher. Participation involves nearly everyone and energy levels range from quiet, thoughtful intensity to noisy excitement about shared discoveries. We offer this handbook with the hope that it will help to make such meetings more instructive and enjoyable for young people and adult participants. We know that those who use the handbook will bring many ideas and strategies of your own to these activities. We ask you to share them with us so that we may, in turn, share them with others.

Peter Kleinbard
Executive Director
May, 1982

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

For more than fifteen years the National Commission on Resources for Youth, Inc., has worked to promote, nurture and establish Youth Participation: programs that enable young people to participate in productive activities, assume real responsibility for what they do, and see their ideas and actions make a difference in the real world.

Youth have made a difference. In communities all over the country--and world--young people have provided service to elderly and handicapped people, tutored other children and youth, preserved the history of their community, built greenhouses and solar collectors, counseled peers, acted as consumer advocates, influenced public policy and much, much more.

These efforts have made as much difference to the young people themselves as to the communities they've served. Research studies have consistently shown that youth engaged in such efforts have made significant gains in basic academic skills, self-esteem, sense of social responsibility, information about careers, moral and intellectual development, concern and valuing of others, propensity to continue being active in their communities, and more.[1]

Youth Participation programs take many forms and operate under diverse auspices. A good many are based in schools, while numerous others are operated by youth organizations, voluntary agencies, or employment and training agencies; still others are independently organized by young people themselves. The participants are involved for varying periods of time. In school programs, for example, they may be engaged in community-based experiences anywhere from one afternoon a week to full time for a semester or more.

Whatever the young people are doing, under whatever auspices and for whatever length of time, there are certain program features which distinguish the most successful efforts. The National Commission on Resources for Youth, in observing and assessing programs over a fifteen-year period, suggests that the most powerful programs are those in which:

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[1] Gartner, Kohler, and Riessman, *Children Teach Children: Learning by Teaching*, Harper & Row, NY, 1971.

- Youth take active roles in challenging action that meets real needs of others;
- they carry real responsibility and make decisions affecting others;
- youth work collaboratively with adults;
- they work as a group toward a common goal; and
- they have an opportunity to reflect critically on their experience through regular group discussions.

It is the last-named characteristic, "opportunity to reflect," that is the focus of this booklet. Its purpose is to provide practical suggestions for encouraging young people to reflect on their experiences in Youth Participation programs: to think about them, write about them, share them with others, learn from them. There is strong evidence that a systematic reflective component is the factor that transforms an interesting and engaging experience into one which critically affects students' learning and development.[2] This outcome is of obvious importance in school-based programs, as well as other Youth Participation sponsors.

ASSUMPTIONS

Four basic assumptions underlie the ideas and activities presented in this booklet. The first is that *Youth Participation programs can and should do more than simply release students from school in order to work in the community*. These programs can have a significant impact on students' education, as well as on their personal development and career and work attitudes and skills.

The second assumption is that this *growth and learning are not an automatic consequence of even the most engaging community experience*. They are the result of a student's deliberate striving to make sense of experience, to learn from it and to act on the insights gained.

The third assumption is that *most people, youth and adults, do not commonly reflect on the meaning of experience*. It is thus an important part of the responsibility of teachers and program directors to encourage and teach students to consciously reflect on their community involvement to the end that it will be a learning experience.

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[2] Conrad, D. and Hedin, D., *Executive Summary of the Final Report of the Experiential Education Evaluation Project*, St. Paul, MN: Center for Youth Development and Research, University of Minnesota, 1982.

This will require greater flexibility and responsiveness than does simply teaching from a textbook, yet it promises more far-reaching effects.

The fourth assumption is that most *teachers and program directors do aim at doing more than providing a community experience, do* intend and attempt to help students learn from their experiences, and *are* looking for an idea or two that may help them do it more effectively. They are the audience to whom this booklet is directed.

USING THIS BOOKLET

This booklet suggests approaches and methods to help the teacher or program leader maximize the students' learning from their community involvement. It does not provide a detailed and foolproof guide for how to run a Youth Participation program or how to structure its reflective component. The world is too unpredictable for that, and each program too unique to be much aided by a prefabricated set of lesson plans. Because no two programs are identical, it is unlikely that any teacher or program coordinator will find all of the sample exercises applicable to his or her particular situation. The expectation is rather that readers will find most of them useful either as they are or as a stimulus to creating new ones to fit their programs.

The first two chapters define what a program's reflective component should contain and suggest alternative ways of incorporating this into existing or new programs. The remaining chapters provide sample activities that can be directly applied or easily adapted to most programs.

CHAPTER ONE

REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER--OR IS IT?

Today I got to the nursing home at 2:00. Talked to some ladies. Passed out popcorn at the movie. Went home at 4.00.

From a student's journal

The student quoted above was surrounded by human drama. On every side were loneliness, love, struggle, joy, death, dignity, injustice, and concern. There were people with wisdom she could draw upon, and with pains she could ease. There were more than a dozen health-related careers to observe and to experiment with. There was more--all missed. The same barren sentences were entered in her journal, twice weekly, for six weeks. She was in a Youth Participation program where she had chosen her own assignment. She was needed there. She was engaged in tasks that mattered to others. But she'd seen, felt, experienced virtually nothing: "Passed out popcorn at the movie. Went home at 4."

It's not supposed to be that way. People are supposed to learn from experience. In fact, a central part of the case for Youth Participation programs rests on claims for the possibility, the value, even the necessity of learning from experience. Supporting evidence is drawn from important thinkers from Aristotle ("we become just by *doing* just acts, brave by *doing* brave acts...") to John Dewey ("experience is both the means and goal of education"). Attention is called to theories of psychological and career development and to recent research on school and other youth programs which demonstrates the power of direct experience as a stimulus for learning. Philosophy and science combine with folk wisdom in ascribing great power to lessons learned in the school of hard knocks.

To say that experience is a good teacher, however, does not imply that it's easily or automatically so. If it were, we'd all be a lot wiser than we are. It's true that we can learn much from experience. We may also learn nothing. Or we may, like Mark Twain's apocryphal cat who learned from sitting on a hot stove lid never to sit again, learn the wrong lesson. The key, as Aldous Huxley explained, is that "experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him." That can be nothing.

Consider the following excerpts from interviews with two young men in a Youth Participation CETA program. Each was in a program designed to raise his career aspirations.

Each spoke highly of his experience. But the impact was not the same. The first had entered the program with "driving a beer truck" on his mind, but was leaving with broader possibilities in view:

Q. Have you thought about doing something like this [reporting/writing] as a career?

A. I dunno. My skills still aren't too good. I had to rewrite everything 5 or 6 times. But it was the first time I done anything that took brains, a mind. I liked using my mind and maybe I should do something like that. [pause] Course I could think a lot better in an office with an air conditioner.

The second had had a set of experiences that to outward appearance were even more successful. But inwardly not much had happened:

Q. What have you learned in this program?

A. Well, when I started I couldn't do nothing. Now I can do it all: design, layout, printing, all that. It's great.

He went on to explain these processes in considerable detail, and then:

Q. What kind of work will you look for next summer, after you leave school?

A. Something in a restaurant. Cook maybe. A dishwasher would be alright though. Ya, a dishwasher. I can do that OK.

Further conversation bore out what was hinted at above, that success experienced during the program was seen as a digression, as a pleasant but essentially meaningless interlude in the predestined pursuit of low skill, low pay, low status jobs.

Two young men in significant experiences. For one, a new view of who he was and what he might become. For the other, the world and he had not changed.

The lesson is inescapable. It is simply not enough to find or create settings in which young persons have active, even responsible roles. The worth of a particular program is not defined solely by the activities in which the youth are engaged, by the new skills employed, by the credit or pay received, or even by what is produced. We can expect more. We can ask that the program's activities also be *learning experiences:* experiences which carry over to

new settings, that live on in new learning, new application of skills, new insight into self, new understandings of the world, new power to learn from experience. These outcomes require that significant experience be combined with significant reflection. One young man who earned academic credit for his internship with a planner in public transportation put it this way:

> Whatever you learn in this program is up to you. *You* have to put the effort in. If a teacher had decided in advance on what you were supposed to learn, it just wouldn't work. You can't predict what you're going to learn in a situation like this. Putting the requirement up to you helps you understand what you want in life, so you start to make your own decisions--and you know *why* you're making them.

It is through reflection and experience--thinking about it, talking about it--that we begin, as Huxley wrote, to *do* something with what happens to us. "The unexamined life," Socrates said, "is not worth living." It may be true that the unexamined experience is not worth having.

REWARDS OF REFLECTION

As the preceding interviews suggest, reflection makes a tremendous difference in the application of an experience, or set of experiences, to one's own life. But this is not easy to accomplish. Serious reflection is seldom the preferred activity of active young people: its value is not always immediately obvious--and never guaranteed. It is important, then, to answer the question "Why do it?" A clear sense of why one is struggling to encourage reflection can help one through some rough spots, and be a guide for selecting the activities most appropriate for one's own program.

The pay-offs, or goals, of encouraging reflection may be considered in both the short and the long run. Two long-range goals are considered first.

Learning to Learn from Experience

Things happen to us. Sometimes we can control them and sometimes we cannot. But we can always learn from them. It's the educational process, the "school," open to us our entire lives. It's called learning from experience--but it's not an automatic occurrence. We are little more born with the skills to learn from experience than we are born with the skills to learn from a lecture or a book. Reflection is a skill, more accurately a cluster of skills, involving observation, asking questions, putting facts and ideas and experiences together to add new meaning to them all. Learning to learn in this way, and instilling the practice as a habit, is what can allow the experiences in a program to live on in the students' lives in new experiences and new learning.

Taking Charge

Being able to learn from experience gives us the power to influence the meaning and impact of things that we do or that happen to us. It does more. It increases our capacity to influence subsequent experience. It puts us in charge.

Youth Participation programs intend to do more than provide immediately satisfying experiences for youth, build skills or bring short-run benefits to a community. The underlying aim is to empower, to help people take charge of their lives. Through significant experience, and reflection on experience, individuals can attain a clearer understanding of the world, a heightened sense of who they are and can be, and increased capacity and inclination to empower others. Adopting that as an aim and practicing the application of intelligence to action is deciding more than to try to make a program work a little better. It is taking a fundamental stand on the purpose and worth of what we do.

In addition to the long-range goals discussed above, practitioners have found that many immediate benefits come from reflective activities in Youth Participation programs. Among them are:

Improved Basic Skills

Improving reading, writing and speaking ability is a deliberate aim of many community involvement programs. Having participants read, keep journals, and discuss their experiences can help develop basic skills while enhancing other program goals and activities. Several years ago a study of career Marines revealed the shocking fact that large numbers of them had substantially declined in basic skills during their term of service--some to the level of illiteracy. They had known how to read, for example, when entering the service, but by not using this skill they had lost it! The retention and improvement of basic skills require ongoing practice which can be encouraged within the context of a Youth Participation program, especially if it is a full-time program.

Better Learning of Subject Matter

A major goal of many programs is to give students the opportunity to apply or practice knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. In addition, these programs often provide the "raw material" for students to generate ideas and observations of their own. Some tie-ins are obvious: helping in a day care center as part of a child psychology class; interning in local government to gain firsthand experience for a course in citizenship. (See "Integrating Subject Matter into a Youth Participation Program," in Chapter 2). A side benefit is that, since the "real world" is, by nature, interdisciplinary, students can learn not only one particular subject, but also the interrelationships between that subject and many others.

Increased Problem-Solving Ability

Being able to analyze problems, generate alternatives, and anticipate consequences are critical skills in any area of life. A recent national study of 30 school-sponsored Youth Participation programs revealed that the key to improving the problem-solving ability of students was the existence, regularity and quality of a reflective component (especially a group discussion) in the program. Students in programs where there were weekly discussions showed significantly greater improvement in the ability to analyze and solve problems than students in programs without group meetings.[3]

A Sense of Community

Many Youth Participation programs are essentially group efforts. Meeting together provides the opportunity to share successes and failures, to call on the help and advice of others, to gain support and a sense of belonging. It also develops a sense of ownership of the overall project, and a commitment to its success.

Clear Assessment of Personal Impact

It's disconcerting to have a student say, at the end of a project, "I just can't tell you how much I've gotten out of this experience"--and then to find that indeed she cannot. Ongoing reflection helps reveal and even determine what personal changes are occurring (in self-image, new skills, ideas about a career) and articulating them helps make them stick. Reflection with this focus helps the individual get the most from his or her experience and adds deeper purpose to the teacher's need to evaluate and report on individual learning and progress.

Improved Performance

Reflecting on experience doesn't always mean finding cosmic significance in whatever one is doing. More often it means thinking about how well a job is going and figuring out by oneself, with a supervisor, or with peers, how to make it go better. Studies of industrial training efforts have consistently found that workers who have the opportunity to talk with others about what they do perform better on the job: in doing their specific tasks, in finding effective solutions to problems (including job frustration and boredom) and, generally, in functioning more productively in an organization.

Improved Program

For a program director, not the least value of a reflective component is the ongoing feedback received on how things are going and the thoughtful application of many minds to the matter of how to make them all go better.

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[3] Conrad and Hedin.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO DO IT

THREE EXAMPLES

There are many different ways to incorporate a reflective component into a Youth Participation program. The three programs discussed below demonstrate some of these alternatives.

Bartram School for Human Services

At *Bartram School for Human Services*, the reflective component aims at understanding one's role in the work place. Students at Bartram, a vocational alternative public high school in inner-city Philadelphia, spend half of each school day on a community placement and half in classes. Every work setting requires the delivery of services to the community in areas like health, education, welfare or the arts. Students work in day care centers, hospitals, with the City Planning Commission or social services centers; they perform a variety of helping services. In school, classes emphasize content related to human service vocations; math focuses on consumer issues; science on ecological issues; social studies on social welfare. The reflective seminars at Bartram are a regular part of the curriculum--designed to provide time for critical reflection on the work experience and personal development. During the seminars, held one hour a week, role playing, improvisation and group dynamics are used to explore the issues that arise in each session. The sense of community that develops among peers and adults during these sessions reinforce a sense of group effort toward a common goal.

Learning Web

Because the *Learning Web* serves a very diverse group of students in a largely rural county, reflection takes place in individual rather than group sessions. In this program, young people aged 14-21 are placed in one-to-one "hands on" learning experiences as apprentices with adult professionals who act as mentors. Apprenticeships to community mentors in area crafts, trades, businesses, and service agencies provide students with the opportunity to learn specific skills and attitudes, to "try on" new adult roles, to make decisions and to take responsibility for their actions while doing something real and practical. The primary emphasis of the placements is educational. Web staff members meet individually with apprentices on the job, at school, or elsewhere in the community to help each participant reflect on and learn from his or her particular experiences. In addition, one staff person (the "Coordinator of Mentors") works directly with community supervisors to help them improve their effectiveness as teachers.

Switching Yard

The reflective component of the *Switching Yard Project* centers on a weekly seminar designed to make internships more meaningful to the students. In this project, students work in a range of community and public agencies, including a day care center, local assemblyman's office, public transportation company, and health clinic.

The seminar, according to its adult leaders, is a place where "students are given a chance to try on new roles, take responsibility for their actions, learn to communicate what's on their minds, and stand up for what they want." The leaders' approach is based on purposely creating what they call "vacuums of direction," that is, situations in which young people are not being told what to do and must therefore supply the direction themselves. These situations take place in an atmosphere of mutual support with a minimum of outside threat. This is accomplished largely through simulation games designed by the leaders. While the specific objectives of the seminars shift from week to week, one condition remains constant: each must be *fun*.

Two aspects of the student internships are addressed in the seminars: 1) the *process* of involvement, i.e., how the intership affects each intern personally; and 2) the *content* of the experience, i.e., what there is to learn about the agencies where they work and, thus, about the community in which they live. In practice in the seminars, these two aspects overlap so much that they are often both being dealt with in the same exercise.

In one seminar, for example, the students did an exercise called "sculpting," in which each intern, using the other participants as "clay", molded them to reproduce his or her work situation. The "content" portion of this exercise was directed at studying influence structures at a work place--how they were reflected or affected by the set-up of the physical environment, how informal influence structures differ from "official" or formal ones, and so forth. Once a student had set up the physical lay-out, its implications were discussed; in one instance, on the basis of the distance co-workers were placed from each other, a prediction was made that there was not much interaction between them, and this turned out to be true. The "process" portion was covered when students were asked to describe where *they* fit into these structures--whether they were in the middle or in a satellite role, for example. How did the fact of being young, or part-time, or a volunteer affect their position? As one of the leaders describes this exercise:

> Mapping out the whole thing physically proved much more useful than just talking about it. It also added some

> insights into ourselves as individuals. One student's was very sophisticated; it was like a stop-action scene. He told each of us how to sit, what to do, what expression to have on our faces, and what was on our minds. It rarely had anything to do with the work going on, it was much more human interaction, including a lot of joking. Of course, that's what he's most tuned in to. Another student was completely the opposite. She's so work-oriented she's hardly aware of how people are interrelating around her. So she has the most trouble of anyone.

Another seminar which dealt with both the content and the process of the internships featured a game in which one student role-played a federal agent sent to investigate the suitablity of one of the interns for a sensitive government post. The "agent" interviewed the intern's sponsor, who was role-played by the intern under investigation. This latter student thus had to answer questions about his or her own qualities as a person, but from another's point of view. To give an idea of how that worked, here are some comments from one of the students:

> I didn't understand the role play thing where you played your own sponsor. I don't know if I got anything from that. I'll say one thing, though, it wasn't easy. There was a lot I wanted to say about myself, but I couldn't, because I realized that she didn't know those things about me. I'm really a different person when I'm there, much more serious and responsible, I guess. At home or at school I assert myself more than I do there. It made me think that my sister knows a completely different person than my sponsor. But she, my sister doesn't know the person *I* think I am; so I guess there's at least three of me.

INTEGRATING ACADEMIC SUBJECT MATTER INTO A YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Too often students' experiences in the community are considered to be separate and unrelated to the work they are doing in the classroom. Yet their placements are rich in learning experiences that, with some active reflection on the part of both teacher and students, can become the basis for a curriculum in such traditional academic subject areas as English, Home Economics, Psychology, Math, Biology or American History.

Some applications of subject matter are more obvious than others. Government and citizenship classes often make use of students' experiences in local government internships as the basis for learning about the democratic process. Working with the elderly can form the experiential base for a study of the physical and psychological effects of aging, of social issues related to problems of the elderly (e.g., old people and the family), or of public, private and voluntary services to this age group. A psychology, human development, or home economics class can be built on student presentations of specific attributes or behavior of the pre-school children with whom they are working.

Project Enterprise

Project Enterprise in Massachusetts, for example, has built an entire curriculum around a full-time Youth Participation program in construction and historical restoration. Originally developed in response to the expressed community need for rehabilitation of a 150-year-old church building, *Project Enterprise* integrates academic study with meaningful community action. Sixty-five general curriculum (that is, non-academic) juniors or seniors spend three days a week in classes and two on project sites. Curriculum has evolved out of project needs. American History begins by examining the historic sites students are renovating, and moves on to an examination of local, state, and national history. The class draws extensively on community resources such as the historical society, and on local residents such as the last miller to operate a mill they are restoring.

The Mathematics program is highly individualized. The teacher draws heavily on practical problems faced at the work sites, and deliberately relates learning to students' needs as fledgling carpenters, electricians, and masons. In the English course, students' reading and writing assignments focus on the theme of self-definition and of taking one's place as a mature person in adult society--tasks faced by *Project Enterprise* students and by adolescents in other cultures and historical periods. Finally, a "Problems in Construction" course is designed to teach building skills and is team-taught by a teacher and a professional builder. Academic credit is awarded through Marshfield High School for both the classroom work and work-site experience.

Enterprise's most visible outcomes for the community are the structures that have been restored, recreated, or improved. A less visible outcome that may be equally (or more) valuable to the community in the long-run is the increased learning and self-respect of the students who have become productive members of their community.

Academically, participants' reading scores have gone up at a much faster rate than those for students in the rest of the region. One student says it best:

> I feel like I learned more this year than all the other years. Because when you're interested in it, when you can do it, you learn it. You should've seen my report card last year--all low grades. This year I got all A's and B's because I like what I'm doing. I'm learning.

HOW REFLECTION TAKES PLACE

In the examples just described, the reflective component fits into each project differently, as determined by its objectives, its schedule and time constraints, and the kinds of problems experienced by its students in their placements. Let us look at the available alternatives in a more abstract way.

Reflective activities as described in this booklet may take place *individually:* writing in a journal, systematically observing something, filling out an evaluation sheet, or working on an assignment. They may take place *with another person:* in a conference with the project director, talking with a site supervisor, or discussing the week's high (or low) points with a friend. Or they may be *in a group:* giving encouragement to others, listening, planning something, brainstorming how to solve a problem a group member is faced with, role-playing, studying related subject matter, or preparing or giving a formal presentation.

These are typical of the modes of reflection described in this booklet. They are rather ordinary activities. So too are the specific exercises or techniques suggested, but they needn't have ordinary effects.

WHEN TO DO REFLECTION

In some cases, the real question is not how reflection takes place, but where and when to do it. Program leaders have found a variety of ways to fit opportunities for reflection into sometimes-inhospitable program structures. Among them are three modes which are most commonly used. They are listed separately, though often a particular program will use a combination of them.

Individual Conferences

Every program provides the opportunity for individual discussions between each participant and his/her teacher or adult supervisor. For example, as part of the initial placement interview, a student may be guided to set particular goals for him/herself which will serve as groundwork for a journal or other self-monitoring method and for periodic follow-up conferences during the course of the program.

Brief Daily Meetings

In some programs students must meet together briefly either before or after going to their community placements to get equipment, arrange transportation, file reports, etc. These gatherings provide opportunities for exchanging ideas, for reporting on successes or difficulties, for group problem-solving and so on. On occasion these sessions are extended to allow for more in-depth discussions.

Weekly Group Meetings

In some cases a group session of an hour or two once or twice a week is built into the program's structure from the beginning. For example, a program involving students as helpers in child care might take up a double period each day; three times a week students would work in day care centers; on the other two days, the double periods would be spent in group discussion (reflection), in studying early childhood development, and in preparing learning activities to be conducted with the small children. Structured time such as this provides opportunities for reflection that could make use of any of the exercises in this booklet.

These are the most common means by which program directors have managed to provide occasions for formal reflection on experience. Of course, merely setting aside time to think, talk, and write about experience does not guarantee that productive reflection will occur, a matter touched on in the next paragraphs.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE REFLECTIVE COMPONENT

Two things are required to give power to reflective activities. First, they should be related to the real experiences of the students, not abstract musing on distant happenings. The second is that as much care be given to the quality and significance of reflective activities as is given to the other activities in the program.

The National Commission on Resources for Youth, Inc., has been studying and working to promote programs in which youth take active and significant roles in the community. They have isolated several features found in the most effective programs.[4] Developed as guides to the program as a whole, they also serve as touchstones for evaluating the reflective activities within a program. The guidelines state that the activities of the reflective component should:

1. *Meet genuine needs*; in the reflective component, particularly the needs of the youth participants;

2. *Provide challenge*; requiring a full expenditure of one's capacities and the opportunity to perform at higher levels than previously;

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[4] M. McClosky and P. Kleinbard, *Youth Into Adult*, National Commission on Resources for Youth, New York, 1974.

Brief Daily Meetings

In some programs students must meet together briefly either before or after going to their community placements to get equipment, arrange transportation, file reports, etc. These gatherings provide opportunities for exchanging ideas, for reporting on successes or difficulties, for group problem-solving and so on. On occasion these sessions are extended to allow for more in-depth discussions.

Weekly Group Meetings

In some cases a group session of an hour or two once or twice a week is built into the program's structure from the beginning. For example, a program involving students as helpers in child care might take up a double period each day; three times a week students would work in day care centers; on the other two days, the double periods would be spent in group discussion (reflection), in studying early childhood development, and in preparing learning activities to be conducted with the small children. Structured time such as this provides opportunities for reflection that could make use of any of the exercises in this booklet.

These are the most common means by which program directors have managed to provide occasions for formal reflection on experience. Of course, merely setting aside time to think, talk, and write about experience does not guarantee that productive reflection will occur, a matter touched on in the next paragraphs.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE REFLECTIVE COMPONENT

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[4] M. McClosky and P. Kleinbard, *Youth Into Adult,* National Commission on Resources for Youth, New York, 1974.

3. *Offer active learning*: an antidote to passive learning for which some students have a particularly low tolerance;

4. *Relate theory to practice*: to test the value of knowledge and to sense what more must be learned;

5. *Provide a community experience*: a sense of community develops from shared goals and work on a common task;

6. *Demonstrate a partnership between youth and adults* where both offer what they uniquely can;

7. *Be both structured and flexible*: having a clear sense of direction, yet responsive to new situations;

8. *Promote genuine maturity* both in what is reflected on and the roles participants assume;

9. *Involve decision making* on what will be considered, and in what way; and

10. *Have real consequences*: the reflection is purposeful, the outcomes make a difference to someone.

Reflective activity pursued within this framework will contribute immeasurably to a program's success.

CHAPTER III

ONGOING REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES

A major premise of this booklet is that there is a difference between "doing" and "learning by doing", between being involved in an activity and being engaged in an experience that leads to personal growth and development. The difference is not in the experience but in the experiencer; he or she makes the difference through conscious attention to what is going on: observing, asking questions, comparing and contrasting with other experiences, forming generalizations and trying to apply these to new experiences. It is this application of intelligence to experience that we call "reflection"; from that process learning and development occur.

It is not easy to learn the cluster of skills involved in the process of reflection, in paying conscious attention to what is going on. The activities in this chapter provide participants with opportunities for practice and refinement of these skills. Writing even one paragraph each day in a journal, for example, helps the writer practice observing and questioning his or her experiences. Discussing or re-reading past entries leads to comparing and contrasting experiences or reactions to them, and this leads in turn to forming generalizations.

The activities in this chapter are ones you will want to utilize throughout the duration of your project. They are presented first because they should start soon after your reflective component begins, and they should continue until it ends. For planning purposes, therefore, they need to be considered even before starting a reflective component.

ACTIVITY #1

WRITING A DAILY JOURNAL

Asking each student to keep a regular journal is one of the most commonly used reflective activities. In some cases the journals remain the confidential property of their writers; in others they are shared regularly with an adult leader or a peer; sometimes they are discussed by a group. Even if a journal is not shared with anyone else, however, it forms a basis for group discussions and conferences. A journal can also be a concrete way for the writer to assess his or her changes.

The following suggestions will help young people who say, "I don't know what to write!"

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY JOURNAL

The journal is basically for you. It is a place to try out ideas, to make sense of what you are doing and how you are feeling. It is a place to practice writing and, in writing, an occasion for some deep thinking.

Set aside a special notebook for this journal. Don't use it for anything else.

Each day write a paragraph describing your experiences. The rest should deal with feelings and ideas that have been triggered by them. The questions below suggest some things you might write about, but are certainly not the only things. On any one day you might write on one or two, but by the end of the project you should have written at least once on nearly every one of them.

- *Tell about the best thing that happened to you this week; something someone said or did, something you said or did, a feeling, an insight, a goal accomplished, etc.*
- *What happened that made you feel you would (or would not) like to do this sort of thing as a career?*
- *How do you think you might need to change to succeed in a preferred career?*
- *What new task did you learn to perform?*
- *What did you do in your work that was enjoyable or satisfying?*
- *Did you get an idea that would improve your work? This program? The world?*
- *What did you do that seemed to be effective in your relationships with others?*
- *What criticisms did you receive and how did you respond to them?*

- *What compliments were you given and what did they mean to you?*
- *What happened that made you feel uncomfortable or unhappy?*
- *What did you do today that made you feel proud? Why?*
- *What were some things you wanted to say today and did not say?*
- *Did you stand up for, assert yourself on, something today? How did it work out?*
- *Did you take some risk today? How did it turn out?*
- *What did you learn from a disappointment or failure?*
- *Were you surprised by anything said to or about you? Explain.*
- *How similar is your impression of yourself to the impression others have of you?*
- *What did you discover, or rediscover, about other people?*
- *How did your feelings about any person change as a result of today's activities?*
- *What feeling or idea about yourself seemed especially strong today?*

END OF ACTIVITY #1

ACTIVITY #2

WEEKLY REPORTS

In some cases it will be most useful to write a straight-forward weekly report like those required of a business or professional person. This can be done either by an individual student or by a group that works together in response to questions such as the following:

- *What was accomplished this week (by self or group)?*
- *When was the time best spent? What made it so?*
- *When was time least well spent? What made it so?*
- *Suggestions for next week (for self, group, or program).*

END OF ACTIVITY #2

ACTIVITY #3

OBSERVATION REPORTS

This activity asks students to focus on and write about one particular issue during each week. Alternatively, an individual observation report can be assigned where it fits into other topics being discussed. (For example, the case study might well be used as an early assignment in a Psychology or Child Development seminar.)

1. CASE STUDY

Assignment:

Observe one client or adult co-worker closely over a period of time, taking notes while you are at your placement or immediately afterwards. Look for specific actions, interactions or comments that seem particularly important for the individual you are observing. Use concrete details in describing this person's appearance, personality, and behavior in your case study.

2. COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

Assignment:

Identify and describe one example of a communication problem that was caused by two people not understanding each other's situation. This problem might involve you or it might be between two other people you observe. Be sure to explain the situation well enough so that it is clear what caused the problem.

3. SEX-ROLE BEHAVIOR

Assignment

People learn roles by hearing about them, seeing them, practicing them. One of the things people must learn is their sex roles (how to be boys and how to be girls); very early they learn what they think is appropriate for males to do and for females to do. Often they develop a rather narrow and stereotyped version of what is "appropriate" behavior and then maintain this view throughout life.

Sometimes our social institutions (day care centers, schools, nursing homes, business affairs) reinforce these narrow views. Your assignment is to (1) observe the behavior of males and females in your field site, and describe a scene in which someone there is learning and/or acting out a stereotyped sex role (e.g., boys refusing to do "girl stuff"), or where they are learning and/or acting out a less narrow version of what is appropriate for their sex; (2) describe how the place

where you work either reinforces, or is trying to broaden, traditional sex role behaviors (through stories, books, activities encouraged, rules, etc.).

4. CAREER INTERVIEW

Assignment:

During this week you are to interview someone engaged in a career in which you are personally interested. Follow the form below, changing any questions that are not appropriate and adding others that you think of yourself.

- *Before you interview, PRACTICE with a friend. Make sure that the questions fit the career and that they give you all the information you need and want.*
- *Bring the form with you to the interview and write down the answers to your questions.*
- *Pay attention to what the person says during the interview. He or she may say something unexpected that will make you think of new questions. Ask these too, and write down the answers.*

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewer _____

Person interviewed _____

Date, time, location of interview _____

Career of person interviewed _____

1. *What kinds of things do you do on this job that most people wouldn't know about?*

2. *Which do you like best about it? Least?*

3. *What other jobs did you have before this one?*

4. *How did you happen to choose this kind of work?*

5. *Would you do it the same if you had it to do over?*

6. *What kind of training and background experience is necessary? Useful?*

7. *What are typical earnings in this work?*

8. *Are there likely openings in this field in the future?*

9. *What kind of person would really hate this job?*

10. *How would I find out about openings for this kind of work?*

11. *Other questions...*

END OF ACTIVITY #3

ACTIVITY #4

LEAVING SOMETHING BEHIND: A PRODUCT

Teachers and school personnel often wonder how to evaluate and credit students' experiences in the community. Preparing a presentation or product helps the students pull together what they have learned, and also gives the teacher or program director a concrete product to use in evaluating students and awarding credit for their work. In addition, the final product enables other students, teachers, and community members to see what the students have done.

- *PLAN EARLY what kind of product each individual or the group will make;*
- *ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME for revisions, editing, correcting and practice, especially with students whose basic skill level is low;*
- *SET DEADLINES;*
- *DON'T save the whole production for the last few weeks; PRODUCE PARTS of it as you go along.*

Here are some sample types of final products:

1. *Make a formal presentation on the project to an appropriate audience like the city council, school board, agricultural extension agents, service organization, or another class or group of students at your school. Or bring in even one resource person--your principal, a school board member. The point is to have the chance to tell <u>some</u> outside audience what you have achieved.*

2. *Produce a lasting document on the project: photo essay, videotape, booklet, or slide presentation. This should show both the achievements and the process in order to help interested persons attempt a similar project.*

3. *Have each participant prepare a "tip sheet" to pass on to later participants some things they have learned. For example, youth working in nursing homes have prepared sheets outlining "Ten Rules for Working with the Elderly."*

END OF ACTIVITY #4

CHAPTER IV

GETTING STARTED

Very early in the life of every program, the program director should: (1) outline for participants how the program will operate; and (2) clarify requirements and responsibilities. In some cases it will also be necessary to develop a basic level of competence in skills needed in the project: how to use a crosscut saw, how to focus a camera, and the like.

In addition, there are beginning tasks for the reflective component of the program. These include:

- Building a Sense of Community;
- Individual Assessment.

The activities in this chapter are divided into the above two areas. The goal of the activities in the first section is to build a cohesive group. This is crucial to the success of reflective activities, for members of the group must trust, support and be able to talk honestly with each other. The goal of the second section is for individual students to assess themselves and define their own areas of strength and weakness. This, too, provides a crucial base for reflection. Only when students know where they started can they assess what they have learned and how they have changed.

BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Educators are increasingly coming to recognize the value of cooperative learning situations in which students can work on problems and projects together rather than as isolated, competing individuals. Students reinforce and strengthen their own learning as they learn from, and help teach, each other.

Some Youth Participation programs are designed as group efforts where a sense of community is viewed as a necessity. But even in the many programs in which students are engaged in separate placements, the development of a cohesive group motivates young people to attend more regularly and work more diligently on their assignments. It gives young people the opportunity to talk to others about what they're doing, to get and give help with individual problems and in other ways to use peer pressure and power in positive ways.

It can be quite a challenge to develop this sense of mutual responsibility among students who are working in different community placements, yet the rewards in increased motivation and learning are great. It is important to acknowledge the differences while building on the similarities. In learning from one another, the students broaden and deepen their understanding of their own work, and overcome the sense of isolation they may feel at their own placements.

A sense of community is not developed merely through a few opening exercises, but the following activities are some ways to begin the process. The first suggests a way to add interest to the process of students introducing themselves; the second is intended to elicit more in-depth information about individuals and to combine this into a group profile; and the third gets students of like interests together to explore the relationship between their interests and their present and future jobs.

ACTIVITY #1

INTRODUCTIONS -- SHARING A PERSONAL FABLE

This activity gives a twist to the usual way of introducing group members to each other -- and it is fun!

Give the following instructions:

> *Tell your name and something about yourself: interests, skills, the kind of music you listen to, career plans...etc. But only your name should be true. Everything else should be made up; a fable, outright lies.*

This is much harder to do than it sounds. Give the students time to think about it, and help out the person in the spotlight by asking specific questions like: "What are some of your favorite subjects in school?" "Do you plan to do some traveling in the future?" and so on.

This activity can be done with the group as a whole or in pairs. If the latter, have students introduce themselves to their partners, then the partners introduce them to the group -- perpetuating the personal fables.

END OF ACTIVITY #1

ACTIVITY #2

PRACTICE INTERVIEWS -- DEVELOPING A GROUP PROFILE

This activity is designed to help students assess what it is they have to offer -- both individually and as a group. The benefits of doing this are: 1) it provides practice in being on both sides of a personal interview; 2) it provides clearer program focus when the exact nature of the program is only generally defined (e.g., to "do something about drug abuse," or "beautify the neighborhood"), and to do so on the basis of the unique talents and interests of group members; 3) it defines for each person how his or her own knowledge and skills are magnified and multiplied when combined with those of the group. This is one step in building a group identity: to have individuals begin to think of themselves in terms of their collective power.

Follow these steps:

1. *Divide into groups of three. In turn, two members interview the third as to his or her interests, skills, and whatever else may be useful in the program -- from why each is in it to whether he or she has access to a car. Each interviewer should be taking careful notes. At the end these will be checked by the person interviewed before being handed in.*

NOTE: These need to be probing, even "pushy" interviews for them to be productive. People often fear being seen as "braggarts" even more than as incompetents, so it's usually necessary to probe to discover their strengths -- like asking for something like "interests" first. It also helps if the teacher models the process beforehand by interviewing one of the students.

2. *Have each member of each sub-group report to the whole group on what they have found out.*

3. *As interests and skills, etc., are named, write them on a blackboard. When everyone is done, you will have a profile of what, collectively, the group has to offer the community. Emphasize that to the degree you develop as a collective unit, each person has not only his or her own skills to work with, but all of the things listed.*

4. *If the project is fairly well defined at this point, go through the list and brainstorm how each of the attributes listed (from "patience" to "pinball pro") could contribute to the project and to the general welfare and functioning of the group itself.*

5. *Conclude the exercise by writing a group resume or an advertisement proclaiming the qualities of the group.*

END OF ACTIVITY #2

ACTIVITY #3

MATCHING INTERESTS AND JOBS*

Materials Needed:

1. *A clock or watch with a second hand.*

2. *Signs for Part II -- "Personal Contact", "Words and Ideas", "Producing Things", "Physical Skills/ Outside Work", "Facts and Numbers", "Creative Work".*

This activity is designed to help young people clarify what they would like to do and are qualified to do.

A suggested time limit is indicated in parentheses for each subsection of the activity. Following these time limits keeps people involved and the energy high. It also encourages students to follow their spontaneous reactions rather than getting bogged down in details.

---

*This was developed by the Switching Yard, Marin County, CA.

Begin by saying to the students, "In this exercise you will think about some of your skills and abilities and see how they can be applied to jobs and to social issues that interest you."

Part I (10-13 min.): Working Individually

A. (5 min.) Think of five specific times in your life when you felt really good about yourself, really strong, happy and whole. Choose five experiences that are as different from each other as possible, and that combine the things you enjoy doing with the things you're good at doing. Write them down (briefly).

B. (3-5 min.) Look back over these experiences, and write down:

1. What things you had to be able to do in order to have these experiences -- your skills.

2. What ways you had to be able to be in order to have these experiences -- your personal qualities.

C. (2-3 min.) Get together with one other person you feel comfortable with. Now share your skills and abilities. Say them positively and strongly -- boast a little bit!!

Part II (15-18 min.): Working in Groups

A. (3-5 min.) Imagine that you're entering a room where people are gathered in groups according to what they're most interested in doing. Which group of people would you join? Go to the area by the sign identifying the group you most want to be part of. (Note: The following signs should be posted around the room.)

People who like activities:

°involving direct personal contact to help persuade, or instruct others

- *Involving words and ideas, communicating*
- *involving repairing or producing things - using tools, machines, etc.*
- *involving physical skills and/or outside work*
- *involving facts and numbers, technical, even scientific work*
- *stressing creative work - with hands, performing, designing, etc.*

B. *(3 min.) In your group BRAINSTORM about the skills and personal qualities needed for working in the area you've chosen.*

C. *(2 min.) Compare these skills and qualities to those you came up with in section 1. Can you add to your list of personal qualities and skills? What skills and qualities would you like to have that you don't have now?*

D. *(7-8 min.) Still in your groups -- Subdividing into groups of 5 or 6 if some of the groups are too large --*

BRAINSTORM:

1) *In what kinds of jobs and careers could the skills and qualities identified in parts I and II be applied?*

2) *How might they be applied in the jobs and tasks of this project? (Here you'll have to focus on rather specific jobs and tasks rather than the project as a whole.)*

If you are interested in applying this exercise to SOCIAL ISSUES rather than jobs, then substitute the following for "D" above and continue to Part III.

D. *(5 min.) Still in your groups -- subdividing into groups of 5 or 6 if some of the groups are over-populated --*

BRAINSTORM: What needs doing or changing -- in your school, community, city or country, the world? Think of as many different things as you can, from the specific to the general, and write them all on a big sheet of paper. Let your ideas flow!

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT/ SELF-EVALUATION

Being evaluated is very threatening to many people, especially those who have been subject to repeated criticism of their shortcomings. Assessment can be a negative experience because

- the person being assessed has no opportunity to contribute to the evaluation;
- strengths never seem to count as much as weaknesses;
- the assessment gets fixed in time, implying that one always was and always will be the way one is now;
- some outside authority not only passes judgment, but also decides what needs to be improved and how.

The activities in this section are designed to allow students to evaluate themselves, first of all -- and to do so in a positive way. They focus on strengths as well as areas that need improvement, and help students decide where to concentrate their own efforts. In addition, many of the activities can be used as post-assessment at the end of the program. (See Chapter 7) This will allow students to see the changes that they have made, and emphasizes the continuous nature of assessment.

In schools, the evaluation of what has been learned is most often left up to the teacher. Yet each student in a Youth Participation program will learn something different; it is difficult if not impossible for a teacher to design an examination that will cover everything. A self-evaluation can be a learning experience in and of itself if it encourages the student to reflect thoughtfully on what he or she has learned through community involvement. The Personal Characteristics checklist in this chapter is especially well-suited to this kind of evaluation, and can be adapted to include specific skills or understandings that are relevant to a particular class or placement.

ACTIVITY #1

MYSELF: THEN AND NOW

An autobiography is not only an account of a life but an account as it appears at a particular moment in time. Events that seemed critical to us ten years ago are barely remembered now, while others barely noticed then, have taken on a new importance. We change in terms of what characterizes us, what's important to us, who we are.

This exercise is intended to help young people to see themselves as changing, developing persons. What they are like today is different from what they were like and what they will be like. This activity emphasizes that a personal assessment is merely a snapshot in time, a base for change, and not a final judgment.

This exercise would fit equally well as part of an individual interview, a basis for a group discussion, or as a take-home assignment in preparation for either of the above.

Give each student a copy of the "Myself: Then and Now Questionnaire" (on the next page). Ask everyone to complete it.

After all questionnaires are completed, ask the students to answer the following questions:

1. *Go back over the list and choose two changes you're happy about. What things, people, events, etc., influenced you to change -- or was it just growing older?*

2. *Look in the last column. Pick out two things that you expect will have changed five years from now.*

MYSELF: THEN AND NOW

To understand who we are and where we're going, it can be useful to see where we've been, and how much we've already changed. The following questions may help you identify some important milestones in your life history. (Use words or pictures -- or both -- to express yourself.)

	Grade School	Jr. High	High School
1. Ideas, dreams about what you might like to do/be as an adult.			
2. Entertainment: TV shows, radio stations, music, etc., that you liked and like.			
3. Subjects/activities in school that you liked.			
4. People in your life you've admired; friends you've had.			
5. Jobs you have had, even if not paid. Put an X by one(s) you've liked.			
6. Things you've done you feel good, even proud about.			
7. Things you hated to do.			
8. Favorite activities or interests outside of school			
9. Two or three events which have had an impact on you: move, family change, etc.			

END OF ACTIVITY #1

ACTIVITY #2

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS CHECKLIST

This exercise is designed to help students take a more in-depth look at their personal characteristics and to make some decisions about possible areas of improvement.

Presenting this list of characteristics early in the program serves: 1) as a common starting point for teacher and student to discuss strengths and weaknesses and to jointly set goals for participation in the program; 2) to let students know ahead of time some of the criteria by which they will later be evaluated; and 3) to create an awareness of the broader goals of the program and some things each student may be able to gain from participating in it.

Have the individual student fill out the checklist and the two questions that follow. Then together with his or her supervisor or teacher the student fills out item three (3). This last item serves then as a kind of contract for the student to show improvement and for the teacher to specially assist in some areas selected by the student.

NOTE: The Youth Volunteer Evaluation on page 57, (Chapter 7, Act. 3) is a post-assessment related to this activity. Doing both activities will provide both you and each student with a way of assessing the impact of the program.

Pe. onal Characteristics Checklist

The following is a list of characteristics which most people would agree are good to have, although no one in the world has all of them to the highest degree. For each of the items listed, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being "perfect") and circle the appropriate number. Later on in this program a similar list may serve as a basis for a joint evaluation between you and your adult supervisor or teacher.

1.	Dependability (can always count on this person)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Cooperation (works well with staff and/or supervisor)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Willingness to Learn and Improve (readily seeks or accepts help when appropriate)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Skill in Communicating with Others (ability to relate to others, listens carefully and speaks clearly)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Problem Solving (Imaginative, resourceful in recognizing and solving problems)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Understanding of People (clear insight into personal/social problems of people)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Self Direction (is able to function alone and does not need to be told what to do)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Productive (gets things done; sticks with difficult, even boring tasks to the end)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Challenge (enthusiastically seeks out difficult, challenging tasks)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Curiosity (always finds something interesting to do, look at, ask about)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Confidence (sees self as capable as most others)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Assertive (enough confidence in own ideas and judgments to express or act on them)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

ACTIVITY #3

ASSESSING CAREER AWARENESS

The following questionnaire is a useful pre-post measure of program impact on career exploration as well as a basis for setting specific goals for individual students.

Instructions:

This questionnaire asks you to think of a job or career field that you might like to enter after completing your education and to answer some questions in relation to that career field or job. For the statements listed below please indicate on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (frequently) how often you have had each experience during the past 12 months. Most students have have had some but not all of these experiences. Therefore, if you have not had that experience mark the answer sheet as 1 for never. If you have had the experience -- select 2 if you have done it only once, 3 if you did it several times during the year, 4 if you did it many times.

In relation to a job or career you might like to enter, how frequently during the past 12 months have you:

	Never	Once	Several times	Many times
1. Talked about the job or career with relatives or friends.	1	2	3	4
2. Talked about the job or career with persons employed in that career field.	1	2	3	4
3. Talked about the job or career with teachers or counselors.	1	2	3	4
4. Read materials about the job or career.	1	2	3	4
5. Observed activities in the job or career.	1	2	3	4
6. Tried out activities related to the job or career.	1	2	3	4
7. Worked in this job or career field.	1	2	3	4
8. Thought about racial, sex or other biases that may exist in the job or career field.	1	2	3	4
9. Thought about the steps necessary to prepare for the job or career.	1	2	3	4
10. Inquired into the range of pay for the job or career.	1	2	3	4
11. Inquired into the level of schooling or type of training required to enter the job or career.	1	2	3	4
12. Thought about the relevance of your current school program to the job or career field.	1	2	3	4

13. *Responsible* 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
(accepts consequences of own acts, doesn't always rely on or blame others)

14. *Self Insight* 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
(has good sense of what s/he can and can't do well)

15. *Risk Taking* 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
(willing to try new things; extend old interests)

Personal Characteristics - Application

1. *From the above list, list 3 or 4 of your personal characteristics that are likely to aid you in doung your job(s) in this program* _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. *Identify 3 or 4 characteristics that may hinder you or cause you some difficulty in doing your job(s) in this program* _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. *List two strong characteristics you hope to develop further in this program, and two not-so-strong areas you hope to improve on.*

Strong, 1 _____

Strong, 2 _____

Not-so-strong, 1 _____

Not-so-strong, 2 _____

Note: You should talk with your supervisor or teacher about specific ways to work on these, and what would show evidence of improvement. For example, "Dependability" could be shown by a 90% attendance record; or you could agree to report weekly on successes in specific areas, e.g. "Today I spoke up when I thought I knew a better way to do the job."

END OF ACTIVITY #2

	Never	Once	Several times	Many times
13. *Inquired into the employment demand for people in this job or career field.*	1	2	3	4
14. *Thought about the lifestyle you would have with this job or career field (for example, the amount of money, working conditions, kind of friends).*	1	2	3	4
15. *Thought about how well the job or career field matches your interests and abilities.*	1	2	3	4

END OF ACTIVITY #3

ACTIVITY #4

WRITING PERSONAL RESUMES

Having an attractive and up-to-date resume is an important asset in finding a job. Although a resume alone rarely gets a person a job, it is often the key to being invited for an interview. One very straightforward way to organize a resume is the following:

I. Personal Data

This includes your complete name, address, and phone number, and other information that may be useful for you to present. Such optional information includes youth birthdate, marital status, whether you have children, and the like.

II. Experience Record

Present employment, previous jobs and volunteer work go here. List type of work as well as employer or agency: e.g., "Worked as kitchen aide at Valley View Nursing Home." or "Raised funds for..." Add the dates and name of your supervisor if they seem relevant and to your advantage. Usually these are listed in chronological order with your present, or most recent, experience given first.

III. Education Record

One acceptable form is: "Attend South Washington High School, and will graduate in June, 1983," or "Currently a sophomore at..." When appropriate indicate what kind of program or type of courses you're specializing in. If you have learned particular skills related to the position you're seeking, these should be listed (e.g., "Can type 50 wpm"). If it's respectable, you may wish to give your grade point average.

IV. Other Activities

This section could, depending on what you put into it, be called such things as: Extracurricular Activities, Personal Interests, Future Plans, Personal Qualities, etc. The point of the section is to have a place to add things not covered in the previous sections such as: "Interested in music and play rhythm guitar in..." or "enjoy working with children..." or "run the 440 for the South Washington H.S. track team" or "plan to become a tool and die maker..." or "In June, 1981, attended the New Jersey Youth Leadership Forum..." and the like.

V. References

If you have quite a bit written already, it may be just as well to have these on a separate sheet. At this stage the most important information is what is contained in the resume itself.

General Suggestions: The purpose of a resume is to make you look as good as possible to a particular employer or organization. It would make sense, then, to organize the above information so that the strongest section is presented first. If there are a number of things to list in a category you may want to list each briefly on a single line (or two); if you have just one or two it may look better as a paragraph with more elaboration of each thing listed. There are really only two ironclad rules about a resume: 1) all the information must be accurate (though, not all information about yourself need be included); 2) it should be typed, neatly, and with everything spelled correctly.

END OF ACTIVITY #4

CHAPTER V

PROBLEM SOLVING

A recent national study of 30 school-sponsored Youth Participation programs identified improved problem solving as one of the outcomes for students in programs including a regular time for reflection and discussion. Conscious attention to the development of this skill will not only improve students' performance at their placements, but will also help them see direct, concrete results from their reflective activities. It will also provide strong motivation for attendance and participation.

The first attempts to encourage serious reflection in this area may feel like "pulling teech."

It may be that:

- *the problems seem too personal to talk about in the group;*
- *the young people fear looking foolish--or even too good--to their peers;*
- *the students are afraid to let their teacher know about problems that might affect their evaluation or grade;*
- *the participants don't understand the problems they are experiencing well enough to articulate them.*

The activities in this chapter are designed to provide both a STRUCTURE and a SAFE ATMOSPHERE for problem-solving. They will give the students tools to use in examining their problems; and they will give the teacher or program director information on how things are really going.

ACTIVITY #1

COUNT THE SQUARES

This activity is an exercise in cooperative problem-solving. It is a game designed to illustrate that when people work on a problem cooperatively, they usually do better than when working individually or competitively. The exercise is a model of how the group can collaborate to solve problems that come up in individual placements, in the group's functioning, and so on.

Follow these steps:

1. *Draw on the board, or hand out, copies of the figure illustrated on page 43. Ask each individual to count the number of perfect squares they see in it.*

2. *Record the individual calculations on the board, and find the mean or median number (usually it will be between 20 and 30) of individual scores.*

3. *Then divide the students into groups of three to five, and have them try again (without commenting on the accuracy of individual scores).*

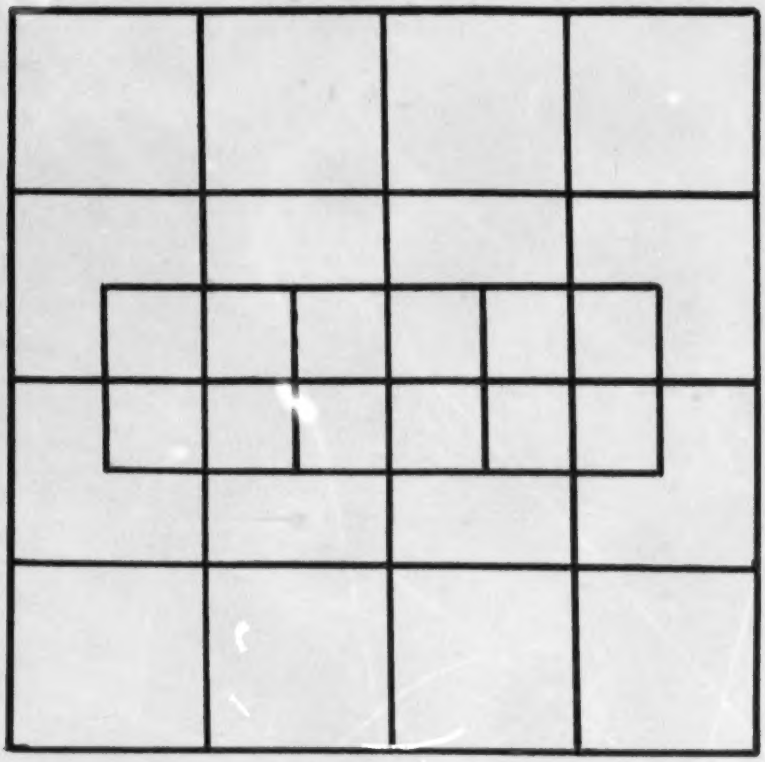
4. *Record the group conclusions and calculate the new mean. Inevitably it will be closer to the actual number of squares (which is 47).*

5. *Discuss if, and why, people did better in cooperation. If the exercise is done in conjunction with discussions of critical incidents (Activity #2, page 44), the point is to illustrate why it is helpful to call on the group for help. You can test this principle by having students present their critical incidents and see if the group arrives at better solutions than originally thought of by the individuals.*

"COUNT THE SQUARES"

1. *How many perfect squares are illustrated in the diagram?*

   a. *Your individual answer* _____.



   b. *Your group's answer*_____.

END OF ACTIVITY #1

ACTIVITY #2

THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

This activity is designed to form the basis for individual and group problem-solving.

Interpreting experience through a focus on critical incidents is a time-honored technique of social science. Here it is presented as a way for students to focus on significant problems and to think through possible solutions either individually or as a group. As a group task it can elevate group meetings beyond the level of "show and tell" to one in which the resources of the group are combined to solve problems of real concern to individual members. As an individual task, the critical incident can become part of daily journals (see page 17, Chapter 3, Act. 1) or weekly reports (see page 19, Chapter 3, Act. 2). In both cases the exercise should be used more than once to help participants practice this kind of reflection. In the process they will learn to see alternatives to their initial reactions or behaviors.

Eplain the activity to students as follows. Be sure to spend some time discussing just what a critical incident is before you ask them to fill out the questionnaire. Ask students for examples of critical incidents for the group to discuss.

The "critical" in "critical incident" does not necessarily mean dramatic or obvious. In fact, it's usually quite the opposite. If a child falls and cuts himself it's rather easy to decide what to do -- easier, you say, than if a child seems really "down on himself" and you want to find a way to lift him up. Often what seems critical to the thoughtful and involved person is missed completely by the casual observer.

What then, is a critical incident? Almost anything where you are -- or feel -- called upon to do or say something and it is not immediately obvious just what you should say or do. The incident may be between you and someone you are helping, or between you and a supervisor. It may be funny, sad, or embarrassing. It may call for a word or for a physical response. It may be someone else's difficulty or your own. What makes it critical is not so much that you feel some anxiety, but that what you finally decide to do (or not do) makes a difference, has consequences, for others -- and for yourself.

Here are some examples.

> *Mrs. Smith, at the nursing home, confided in me that her personal items were being stolen from her room by the maid that cleans it. She said she knew who it was, and that she told the nurses, but that they don't do anything about it; don't even seem to care.*
>
> *Today when I sat down to work with Chris he wouldn't even talk. When I asked him finally to open his book, he said: "I hate this book, and I hate you."*

This exercise is meant to get you consciously involved in the problem-solving process. This process begins when you recognize -- not just see, but sense, feel, care about -- a problematic situation. Solving it involves 1) an immediate response; 2) thinking of other possibilities; 3) imagining the consequences of each; 4) plunging deeper into thought to grasp the "real" problem; and 5) choosing the course of action that seems right based on your thinking and your values.

Name _____

CRITICAL INCIDENT

1. *Describe an incident or situation that was a critical problem in at least the sense that it was not immediately obvious to you what to do or say.*

2. *What's the first thing you thought of to do (or say)?*

3. *List three (3) other actions you might have taken (or things you might have said).*

4. *Which of the above seems best to you now? Why is it best?*

5. *What do you think is the real problem in the situation; why do you think it came up at all?*

END OF ACTIVITY #2

ACTIVITY #3

WRITING A PLAY

This adaptation of the critical incident technique might be called role playing, and used in a social studies class, or writing a play, and used in an English class. However it is used, it is yet another way to help students gain a new perspective on a problematic situation. It can be especially effective when the volunteer involved plays the part of the other person (staff member or "helper").

Divide the students into small groups of 3-4 each, putting those in similar placements together. Ask each group to choose one situation to start with. (They may go on to role play several if there is time.) The student who was involved in the situation gives each other person a role and briefs him or her on relevant information. If desired, one person can be the scribe, writing down the dialogue as it occurs. The group then acts out the situation, several times, trying out several different resolutions to see which one seems best. The teacher may want to ask the students to switch roles to gain different perspectives on the situation.

The discussion afterwards could focus on the relative effectiveness of different solutions; what it "felt" like from each character's point of view; and especially on any underlying problems which caused the situation to occur in the first place.

END OF ACTIVITY #3

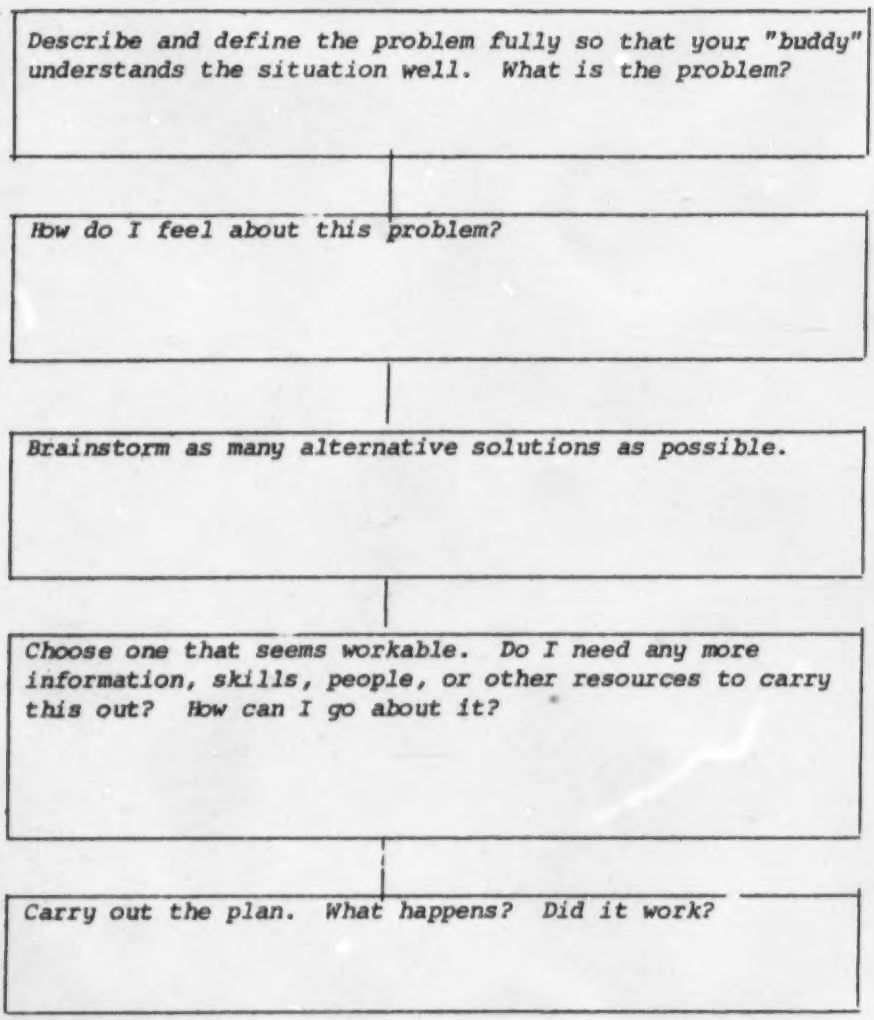
ACTIVITY #4

PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

This activity provides a structure to help students reflect on problems in more detail than the preceding critical incident technique. It is best done in pairs or small groups. Some programs assign pairs of interns to be "buddies" who share the week's events with each other; these buddies could also use this model to help them gain new perspectives on particular problems they are facing.

The use of a structure such as this one is especially effective in helping young people begin to think about problematic situations in new and more productive ways.

PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL


Describe and define the problem fully so that your "buddy" understands the situation well. What is the problem?
How do I feel about this problem?
Brainstorm as many alternative solutions as possible.
Choose one that seems workable. Do I need any more information, skills, people, or other resources to carry this out? How can I go about it?
Carry out the plan. What happens? Did it work?

END OF ACTIVITY #4

CHAPTER VI

INTERIM EVALUATION

We commonly make the mistake of waiting until the end of the semester or year to ask students to evaluate their experiences. At that point nothing can be done about it. The following evaluation of the community placement site is useful during the program to get a quick reading on how things are going. The answers can provide a basis for individual conferences -- or group problem-solving. Just the fact of asking conveys the message that things can be changed and that someone cares. The evaluation is also useful at the end of the program, (see Chapter 7, page 52) as a post-assessment of the program's impact.

Evaluation of Community Work Placement

_____ _____

Name *Site*

INSTRUCTIONS

The following list describes some possible features of a community placement. Please describe <u>your</u> particular experience by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5.

		Practically Never	Once in a Great While	Some-times	Fairly Often	Very Often
1.	I have enough work to keep me busy.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	What I do is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I find my tasks challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I'm given enough training to do my tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I do things myself instead of just observing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I have adult responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I am learning things that will help me in my future employment or education.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I am given clear directions.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I have a variety of tasks to do at the site.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Adults at site take a personal interest in me.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I have freedom to develop and use my own ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel I am helping people or improving my community.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	My job is just busy work.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I think the site is a safe place to work.	1	2	3	4	5

	Practically Never	Once in a Great While	Some-times	Fairly Often	Very Often
15. I am appreciated when I do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I get help when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I discuss my experiences with my supervisor or co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel I'm doing a good job at this site.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I make important decisions.	1	2	3	4	5

My overall rating of my placement(s) at this point is

_____ *excellent* _____ *good* _____ *fair* _____ *poor* _____ *terrible*

END OF V, 1

CHAPTER VII

PULLING IT TOGETHER

The last days of a program are for bringing individual assignments to a conclusion, for feeling pride in achievement, for assessing what has been gained, and for synthesizing the many parts of the experience into a personally meaningful whole. Such synthesis can be facilitated through sharing experiences with others, evaluating performance, and articulating how one has grown from experiences in the program.

In this chapter, each of these processes is illustrated by a specific activity: coat of arms, revising the personal resume and, as appropriate, redoing questionnaires used in pre-program assessment.

ACTIVITY #1

COAT OF ARMS EXERCISE

Materials Needed:

One large shield (like the example on the next page) for each group member

Magic Markers for each group member

A set of directions for each group member

This activity allows students to identify and articulate what they have experienced, and to translate it into visual terms. It only works as a culminating activity if there has been ongoing reflection by each student and by the group about the effects of their community placements.

To prepare for the activity, make sure that each student understands what a symbol is. If you find that they are unfamiliar with the concept, discuss familiar holiday symbols.

Give each person a large shield like the example on the next page. Give them a set of instructions, and ask them to fill in their shields in answer to the questions. Take one question at a time, and discuss all the drawings before going on to the next question.

After the shields are completed, explain and share them in pairs, in small groups or with the group as a whole.

Answer each of the following questions for yourself. Then draw a picture, design or symbol that expresses your answer in the appropriate area on your shield. The important thing is that you know what each symbol expresses.

1. *Identify the personal accomplishment that you are proudest of in your assignment.*

2. *Identify your greatest failure in your assignment.*

3. *Identify your happiest moment in your assignment.*

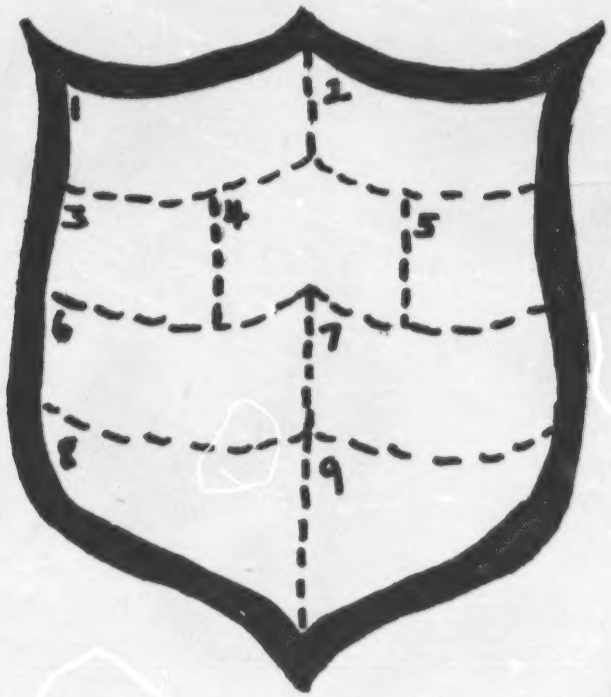
4. *Identify your saddest moment in your assignment.*

5. *Identify your angriest moment in your assignment.*

6. *Identify three opportunities that your assignment offers to you and that you consider important to others.*

8. *What would you change about yourself to make your experience more valuable to you?*

9. *What would you change about your assignment that would make the experience more valuable to you and/or others?*



END OF ACTIVITY #1

ACTIVITY #2

REVISING PERSONAL RESUMES

Refer to the Personal Resume on page 39 (Chapter 4, Section 2, Activity 4). Using the same format, ask students to revise and add to the resumes completed at the beginning of the program. This not only provides them with a concrete assessment of what they learned from their placements, but also gives each of them an accurate, up-to-date resume that can be used when looking for a job.

END OF ACTIVITY #2

ACTIVITY #3

REASSESSMENT

Materials Needed:

Career Awareness Questionnaire (See page 36, Chapter 4, Section 2, Activity 3)

Evaluation of Community Placement Questionnaire (See page 50;, Chapter 6)

Youth Volunteer Evaluation (See page 57)

Part One

Give each student a copy of the Career Awareness Questionnaire and/or the interim evaluation form, Evaluation of Community Placement--if these have already been used early in the program.

After these are completed, ask the participants to compare their answers now with the answers they gave earlier. Are the answers different? If so, how? Can they explain the differences?

The process of comparing pre to post answers on these questionnaires will not only help students evaluate changes in themselves, but will also provide evidence of overall program impact.

Part Two

The Youth Volunteer Evaluation, on page 57, is another version of the Personal Characteristics Checklist on page 35 (Chapter 4, Section 2, Activity 2). Give one to each student to complete; give one also to each student's supervisor.

After all evaluations are completed, compare responses in two ways: 1) compare student responses with the earlier Personal Characteristics Checklist; and 2) compare student responses with their supervisors' responses.

In both comparisons, discuss differences. What are they, very specifically? How can these differences be explained? Focus, too, on the specific changes that each student has made and on areas for further improvement.

Again, the use of these questionnaires will not only provide students with concrete evidence of how they have changed, but will also show the impact of the program.

YOUTH VOLUUNTEER EVALUATION

NAME OF STUDENT _____ *SUPERVISOR AT AGENCY* _____

AGENCY _____ *NUMBER OF DAYS VOLUNTEERED* _____
(Verify from student Time Card)

DATE _____ *CHECK ONE:*
Keep this evaluation confidential ___
Share evaluation with volunteer _____

INTRODUCTION: Community Involvement offers an alternative learning experience for the student volunteer in which he/she can "try-on" various adult roles while providing vital services for the community. It is our position that Youth Participation should be a major component of a school district's efforts to provide citizenship education because:

- *Young people are citizens now, not merely preparing for citizenship;*
- *As citizens, adolescents can contribute significantly to the welfare of their communities;*
- *As adolescents, they benefit from the opportunity to participate as citizens;*
- *Schools can and should facilitate Youth Participation in community agencies and issues;*
- *Schools can and should systematically encourage young people to reflect on their Youth Participation experiences.*

Community agencies accepting youth volunteers are sharing in the citizenship education effort and should:

- *Provide the volunteer with constructive feedback;*
- *Provide significant tasks for the volunteer which directly meet the genuine needs of the clients served by the agency;*
- *Provide both structure and flexibility--give the volunteer a sense of direction while encouraging him/her to be responsive to new situations;*
- *Provide the volunteer with decision-making opportunities where the outcome matters to someone;*
- *Encourage the volunteer to reflect on his/her experiences.*

EVALUATION DIRECTIONS: We request two evaluations from an informed person at your agency each semester (eighteen week period): one after eight weeks and the second after seventeen weeks. The youth volunteer at your agency will give you the dates for the eighth and seventeenth weeks. Please return your evaluations either to the Community Involvement Center at Eisenhower High School (Eisenhower volunteers) or Lindbergh Social Studies Resource Center (Lindbergh volunteers).

For each of the qualities below, circle a number on the scale: an "N" indicates no opportunity to observe the student on that quality; 12-10 = superior to excellent performance; 9-7 = excellent to above average performance; 5-4 = average performance; 3-1 = below average performance; 0 = failure to perform at a minimum level.

1.	*ATTENDANCE*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Nearly always attends.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Attends most of the time.*	*2 1 0 N* *Inconsistent attendance.*
2.	*ACTION ON ABSENCES*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Always notifies in advance.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Notifies after the fact.*	*2 1 0 N* *Fails to notify Agency.*
3.	*PRODUC-TIVITY*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Perseveres in difficult, even routine tasks.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Works well at jobs that interest him/her.*	*2 1 0 N* *Quits at first obstacle.*
4.	*COOPERATION*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Works well with staff and/or supervisor.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Works satisfactorily with others.*	*2 1 0 N* *Uncooperative.*
5.	*WILLINGNESS TO LEARN & IMPROVE*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Readily seeks or accepts help when appropriate.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Accepts help somewhat grudgingly.*	*2 1 0 N* *Ignores needed help or is overly dependent upon help.*
6.	*SKILL IN COMMUNI-CATING WITH STAFF & OTHERS*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Outstanding ability to relate to others; listens carefully & speaks clearly.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Willingness to try to relate; listens & speaks satisfactorily.*	*2 1 0 N* *Unable or unwilling to try to relate; doesn't listen, speaks incoherently.*
7.	*PROBLEM-SOLVING*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Imaginative, resourceful in recognizing & solving problems.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Satisfactory.*	*2 1 0 N* *Confused, haphazard in attacking problems.*
8.	*UNDERSTANDING OF PEOPLE*	*12 11 10 9 8* *Clear insights into personal/social problems of people.*	*7 6 5 4 3* *Some awareness.*	*2 1 0 N* *Indifferent or unaware.*

END OF ACTIVITY #3

CONCLUDING NOTE

Some 400 years ago, Montaigne, the French philosopher, wrote, "In the experiences that I have of myself I find enough to make me wise--if I were a good scholar." It is the last phrase which makes all the difference. Many Youth Participation programs feature useful and challenging experiences for young people. But it is in the reflection on these experiences that students gain new knowledge and deeper insight into self, others, the world. It is in promoting reflection that adults can empower young people to learn and to grow from subsequent experience--to be scholars of their own experience.